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C—4 SUNDAY, January 1, 1950

It Begins Now

Astronomers, students of time, makers of almanacs, and a lot of other people of that sort insist that the second half of the twentieth century will not begin until a year from today. Technically, they are quite right, but that does not alter the fact that all the rest of us—as a matter of practical reality—regard them as quite wrong, and so they will save themselves a great deal of futile argufying if they just shake their heads over our incorrigible illogic and give up without further ado.

After all, a man born on January 1, 1900, is fifty years old today, and nothing in the world can convince him that his century is a jot, a tittle or a whit younger. As he figures things, they both started out together, and if he himself has completed five decades, then surely it has, too. He is mighty proud of the coincidence. He even feels that it makes him a bit historic—sort of the quiet twin of a fabulously turbulent time. Certainly, no matter how correct the hair-splitting technicalities, he is not going to be persuaded to think otherwise. Besides, to paraphrase Mark Sullivan, the date January 1, 1950, seems to the eye, and sounds to the ear, more like the beginning of the century's second half than does January 1, 1951.

Everything considered, the calendar experts are beating their heads against a stonewall in this matter. Right as they may be, they cannot get anywhere against the neatness of round numbers and the immovable force of popular usage. As for itself, going along with the latter, The Star hopes that the world, between now and 2000 A.D., will become so peaceful that there will be nothing to argue about but the question of when centuries begin and end. Meanwhile, Happy New Year to one and all!

Looking Back From 2000

A story that begins on the first page of today's Star attempts to reconstruct for the reader some of the things that journalists, historians, diarists and personal correspondents were writing about the Washington of 1800. There are also interesting reminiscences by such alert chroniclers as Robert Lincoln O'Brien and others recalling the Washington of fifty years ago. And The Star's Pictorial Magazine recounts in photographs a few of the events that marked the past half century of the Capital's growth.

What will Star writers be telling for their readers on January 1, 2000? A Jules Verne or a Bellamy, looking backward, might choose other fields for their speculative crystal-gazing. But The Star believes its writers of fifty years hence will assuredly comfort their readers with the observation that if *they* think *they* have troubles now, remember what the Washingtonian of January 1, 1950, had to contend with!

In those days, the reader will be told, there were only four bridges across the Potomac River and only three across the Anacostia. There were actually arguments about whether one additional bridge over the Anacostia should be built on the line of Massachusetts avenue or East Capitol street—as if one would suffice! There was not even one bridge crossing the river from Washington to Alexandria.

Once the river crossing was achieved, however, the motorist of 1950 had a difficult time getting to downtown Washington, as it was then called. The Whitehurst Freeway only recently had been opened—the only one of its kind! There were no other elevated or depressed highways. There were not even the freeways and parkways we know today that encircle the congested sections of the city. Motorists were permitted to park on the public streets, thus adding to the congestion of too many automobiles.

As for air traffic, Washington was still trying to struggle along with one airport at Gravelly Point. The big terminals we know today, located thirty and forty miles from the center of the city, were only being talked about. Right across the river from the National Airport were separate airports for the Air Force and the Navy, which in those days were more or less independent, in spite of a recently authorized merger "at the top," as jokingly described.

It is still a bit difficult to realize that what was known in 1950 as Greater Washington contained many politically independent but overlapping communities, without any positive, over-all means of co-ordination. There was no Metropolitan Area Public Utilities Commission nor Public Works Authority to handle such matters as public utility regulation, policing, fire protection or the construction of bridges and highways for the Washington region as a whole.

Looking back upon these disadvantages faced by the Washingtonian of 1950, our respect increases for the far-sighted planners and builders of the last half of the twentieth century, whose efforts have produced the great Capital of January 1, 2000. Their record should inspire us to greater efforts for the solution of our own problems. We need still more bridges! Let us burrow further underground for parking space! Let us have three-deck highways instead of merely two-decks! Let us have more economy, but higher appropriations! Let us get everybody on the Government payroll, instead only nine out of ten! Let us hurry up and get more, and more and more of everything, before our supply of quotation marks is exhausted!

Terrible and Wonderful

A half century, least of all the kind of half that is regarded as coming to a close today, cannot be summed up and defined adequately in a few paragraphs or even in a few books. So much has happened in and to our Nation and the world since January 1, 1900, so many tremendous things—such change, such revolution, such deep and far-reaching eruptions in mankind's thinking and environment—that the mind, looking backward and striving to gather the whole of it in a single picture, can at best see only myriad bits and pieces dizzily whirling about. There is no ordered pattern here. What we have, instead, is a gigantic kaleidoscope of the truly terrible and the truly wonderful intertwining in a way that somehow chills the spine and exalts the spirit at one and the same time.

When the century opened, in the soft and tranquil afterlight of the Victorian Era, the world was relatively at peace, life was slow-paced, and men—with their horses and carriages, with their hopes, with their dreams, with their fresh resolves, with their sentimental toasts at midnight—looked forward to a future of quiet progress. They sensed that they were on the threshold of something very big, something very new, but they did not suspect that either the bigness or newness would be nearly so spectacular and phenomenal as the passage of time has since demonstrated. Telephones, automobiles, the radio, aviation, television, steady technological advances, the constant increase in labor's productivity, the immense growth in population, the development of near-miraculous drugs, the amazing gain in the average human being's life expectancy—these things and their kind were not foreseen in quite the way that they have come about.

Nor did men in 1900 foresee the First World War or the Second World War. Kaiser Wilhelm, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt were all either virtually unknown or little more than mere boys. Events and personalities had not yet interacted on each other, and on the great bulk of humanity, to shatter forever, irreparably, the past social, political, economic and military patterns of national and international life. Out of the agonies and upheavals of the new times, bringing on the dissolution of colonialism and the twilight of such things as laissez-faire enterprise, there now came the modern version of totalitarianism, more complete and appalling than any of its predecessors. There came, too, the day—which is still here—when democracy, half unbelievingly, found itself fighting for survival in a problem-ridden age poisoned by the mutual fear and suspicion of a fateful power contest revolving around the Russian and American giants. To cap everything, with a sudden blinding flash, the atom blew up in mankind's face—one of history's most portentous developments, full of the promise of enormous good, but also a force of unparalleled potential evil.

All this constitutes merely the outline of an outline of an outline of what has happened in the past 50 years. What must always elude us, of course, what we cannot measure, what we cannot capture and imprison in a thousand paragraphs or a thousand books, is what humanity itself, ruler and ruled, has felt during that time. Loneliness of spirit—the ice that flecks a man's soul when he thinks of himself as a tiny accident without meaning in a universe that has no God—has been widespread in an epoch of growing materialism and declining religious faith. There has been much weeping. There has been much suffering, much fear, much heartache, but laughter and happiness have been present, too, in portions probably as great as that enjoyed by many a generation in other centuries. Despite the Cassandras and the Jeremiahs, despite the terrors that have been visited upon the world since 1900, our race, in these last five decades, has wrought so many wonders that it has ample reason now to face the next five with confidence in its ability not merely to survive but to improve upon itself as well.

The world is not the same as it was 50 years ago. It is not the same as it was yesterday, nor will it be the same tomorrow as it is now. In Henri Bergson's familiar phrase, "To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on evolving one's self endlessly." Nothing stands still in the life of man or the society of nations. Since 1900, the terrible and the wonderful have happened with a unique speed that has markedly accelerated the pace of history, but that fact, if it has tended to befuddle peoples and governments alike, ought not to frighten them or make them despair of moving forward to a better day. In all probability, when the second half of this century closes, our children and our children's children will be around to drink a midnight toast to us and our time. They may be living, by then, in a genuinely good and enduring peace. If so, while honoring us for having worked hard to that end, they may well say of us that we worried just a bit too much about their chances. In any case, to them and to the future, with hope!

A Wise Decision

The Sesquicentennial Commission's Executive Committee has been wise in recommending to the full commission a delay, a review of everything that has been done and the adoption of strict rules of procedure governing future actions in connection with the proposed Freedom Fair.

In other circumstances, all of this might well have been done several months ago. But in fairness to the commission, the uncertainties over whether Congress would appropriate any funds for the celebration and the overzealous haste in getting things started after the appropriation was tardily approved, created some confusion and an embarrassing lack of orderly procedure which only recently became evident to the officials and citizens who have volunteered their services on the commission.

If there is to be a Freedom Fair—and such a thing might be made a very creditable exhibition—much more time is required in arranging for it than would be available between now and July 4. It is also necessary now to review what commitments have been made without the commission's full knowledge and approval, what liabilities have been assumed and whether all steps taken up to this time will meet the careful scrutiny that is necessary in passing on use of public funds. The Star is confident that any mistakes that have been made on the part of those acting for the commission were the errors of faulty judgment under pressure of time and lack of experience and that there is time now to correct such mistakes under a more orderly system of procedure.

The Star is glad to find the unanimous sentiment among members of the Executive Committee for full publicity on everything that has taken place up to this time, with the same policy applying to future negotiations over contracts and fees.

For Congressional Reform

Governmental reorganization generally is taken to mean modernization of the executive branch in the interest of efficiency and economy. The National Committee for Strengthening Congress is doing a public service by reminding Congress that, as an important branch of the national Government, it should see to it that its own house is set in order, too. The reminder is contained in a constructively critical report sent to all members of Congress by Robert Heller, chairman of the voluntary citizens' group.

Mr. Heller is well qualified to be a spokesman for the committee. A Cleveland business engineer, he prepared the report which led to passage of the La Follette-Monroney congressional reorganization legislation in 1946. He has been engaged for some time in a business management study for the Department of Defense. The La Follette-Monroney Act has effected a number of valuable legislative reforms, including a general reorganization of committees and of committee work. The benefits of these improvements were noticeable in recent sessions.

But, as Mr. Heller point out, these same sessions have disclosed several weaknesses in the legislative machinery that need to be repaired. No better time could be chosen to correct these weaknesses than now, when the national consciousness is being awakened to the importance of governmental efficiency on a broad scale. One of the outstanding defects of the legislative process still uncorrected is the haphazard way Congress has of handling appropriation and revenue bills. The 1944 Heller report and the 1946 congressional reorganization law sought to put this system on a businesslike basis through adoption of a legislative budget. Under this plan Congress early in the session was to agree on an over-all spending figure, below which the total of all appropriation bills should fall. But the plan has not worked out as expected, largely because of the difficulty of estimating a legislative budget that could be adhered to in times of national and international emergency.

However, Mr. Heller and his associates have not given up hope for eventual success of the budget arrangement. They believe that Congress has not given the plan a fair trial. An adequate staff of fiscal experts, aiming at "aggregate figures rather than framing a detailed, itemized budget," could make the system effective, according to Mr. Heller. The merging of appropriation bills, joint committee work and similar timesavers are recommended. Much progress already has been made in this direction. The committee also urged further revision of congressional rules to speed up debate and action and it reiterated its 1944 suggestion that Congress divest itself of much of the task of legislating for the District of Columbia, through some form of local home rule.

The citizens' group is right in holding that reorganization should be a continuing project. Creation of a new joint committee, as recommended by Mr. Heller, would give the task added importance. Unless some such group is appointed, the efforts to make Congress function more smoothly are likely to be as hit-and-miss in the future as they have been in the past.

Then Embrace

By Bruce Barton

Most of the foreign countries have "devalued" their currency, and we Americans are about to engage in a large-scale program of devaluing ours.

We won't do it formally; we won't announce or admit that we are doing it. What we will do is to pile up national deficits, which mean more inflation, more taxes, and hence less purchasing power for every dollar you and I earn.

Have you ever stopped to think about the amazing change that has taken place in the American attitude toward public debt? It all has happened so swiftly as to be almost terrifying.

We came out of the First World War with what everybody thought was a dangerously big debt, about $25,000,000,000. There was no division of public sentiment on the subject; all persons and parties were agreed that it should be paid off as fast as possible. Calvin Coolidge, the great economizer, was the hero of the hour. He scrimped and saved and paid off a little less than 5½ billion dollars.

Came the debacle of 1929, and Herbert Hoover, though he hated the idea, was compelled to increase public expenditures. He came to the end of his term having added 5½ billion to the debt.

For this crime Franklin Roosevelt castigated him unmercifully in the campaign of 1932. Debt was slavery, cried Mr. Roosevelt; taxes are "paid in the sweat of every man's brow." He promised economy and a 25 per cent reduction in Federal operations.

Each time he came before Congress as President with a new budget message he apologized for not having yet balanced the budget and made a payment on the debt. There had been a new "emergency" which compelled postponement of his good intentions, but next year he would do better.

This went on for three or four years. Then F. D. R. threw all pretense out the window, quit apologizing for the debt, and began defending and praising it. Debt no longer was slavery; it was national income, welfare, security, "the more abundant life."

Now both political parties are committed to more and bigger expenditures, more debt, less value for our dollars.

Alexander Pope wrote these famous lines:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

In the matter of the national debt, we have passed through the stages of "endure" and "pity."

We now are in the "embrace."

Spires of the Spirit

New Days for New Years

A Message for the Start of 1950 as a Series of Ventures of Faith and Trust

By the Rev. Frederick Brown Harris, D. D., Litt. D.

With a new face at the door we are all keenly conscious of the hour glass of time and how swiftly the sands are running out. For each of us the sun dial illumines the always startling solemn phrase, "It is later than you think."

New Year Day is a time for summaries, reviews, reveries, analyses, interpretations and prognostications. Monthly publications and the daily press are presenting striking word pictures of the changes that have come in so many phases of living since, with blasts of screeching noise there was ushered in a new century when the books of 1900 were closed. But no picture thrown upon any vast screen of the passing years changes the fundamental fact that life comes to us not in bundles of years, decades or centuries, but in days. We may study history a hundred years at a time, but we actually live a day at a time.

All strategy for great living and noble achieving is based on the beautiful, beneficent law of day-by-day. If one cannot conquer and color a day it is hopeless to think of victory in any larger unit of time. That means that we must learn to shut out the yesterdays and shut off the tomorrows. Blocking off the past is as necessary as it is difficult. When an old doctor was dying a clergyman asked him if there was any message he would like to leave for those who had trusted his skill and admired his unruffled tranquility. "No," he answered, "except that through life I think I have always closed the gates behind me." It was a simple statement. But in it was imparted a great secret.

* * * *

Then, for radiant living, we must decide what we are going to do about tomorrow. Some one defined worry as: "The thinking we do today which ought to have been done yesterday." A wise man coined a word expressing just what worry is. He called it "fearthought" to distinguish it from "forethought." Forethought is concern for tomorrow expressing itself intelligently. Fearthought is concern expressing itself irrationally and leading to failure and misery.

That eminent surgeon, Sir William Osler, advised medical students: "I urge, as the safety of a ship depends so largely on its water-tight compartments, that you learn to live with daytight compartments as the most certain way to insure safety on life's voyage." Did not the greatest Master of Life the ages have known whisper His choicest secret when under the blue sky of Palestine He said, "Do not be troubled about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. The day's own trouble is quite enough for today."

How often we rob ourselves of the stamina to meet unexpected crises by expending needed energy in tormenting ourselves about phantoms with whose reality we never will have to wrestle. When a little girl asked Mark Twain, who lighted each day with a candle of humor, to write something in her autograph album, he inscribed words she remembered as long as she lived: "I have known many sorrows, most of which never happened at all." It usually comes to pass that when today arrives it is void of the goblins fearthought had conjured.

* * * *

The Teacher of Galilee never told His followers to pray for bread security for the rest of their lives—or even for a year. But at the altar of each dawn they were taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The highest wisdom on the first day of the new year is that we make each day a venture of trust.

Everybody who lives in a house falls down stairs every day. But they do it with safety and go on their way rejoicing because they have learned to fall one step at a time. The supreme secret is to meet what any day brings with a consciousness of available spiritual resources waiting to flow around our incompleteness through the channel of our own faith, if we but keep the channel clear of impurities and unbelief. Then and then alone can we meet life's joys with gratitude, its difficulties with fortitude and its tasks with fidelity. So let us remember this day that the year ahead—if we are privileged to see it through till the volume of the half century is closed—is not a span of 12 months; it is 365 separate days, with the promise for each day, "As thy day so shall thy strength be."

"God broke our years to hours and days,
That, hour by hour and day by day,
Just going on a little way
We might be able all along to keep quite strong.
Should all the weight of life
Be laid across our shoulders and the future rife
With woe and struggle meet us face to face
At just one place,
We could not go;
Our feet would stop, and so
God lays a little on us every day."

Letters to The Star

Denies the Bible Limits Man To Three Score Years and Ten
To the Editor of The Star:

In your very fine editorial of December 27, "Long Life and Population," there is one phrase which I, as a Bible student and teacher of a half century and more, would like to correct. The editorial states: "Today the average life expectancy of mortal man in the United States is not yet equal to the biblical allotment of 70 years."

But nowhere does the Bible say or imply that man's span was planned by the Creator as limited to 70 years. The often-misquoted passage is from the 90th Psalm—written by Moses about 1500 B.C., or 2,500 years after the creation. The King James version (Psalm 90, verse 10) says, "The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Moses was recording a condition that had come about because of contributing factors—which were, and are, all contrary to the Creator's original plan. The Bible record of the years between the creation and Moses' time is of "giants in those days" and of many who lived for centuries. Vegetarians claim their longevity was due to non-meat eating prior to the Flood. In Jacob's family, longevity decreased from about 200 years for his great-grandfather to something over a century for Jacob.

Whatever the contributing factors and however one's conclusions, the Bible does not say, as misquoted and misunderstood by many, that the Creator intended man's span to be "threescore and ten" (and possibly fourscore). NORMAN SANDRIDGE.

Objects To "Remote Control" Of Bus and Trolley Riders
To the Editor of The Star:

In the November 3 issue of your paper you very generously gave me space to point out a well-known fact that, unless the hearing mechanism is impaired, the ear has no protection against sound vibrations. Hence, in a streetcar or bus the radio broadcaster has a captive audience, and those having good hearing must "take it."

The implications of future possibilities in this type of radio broadcasting are too sinister to permit such a situation to become established.

For instance, the other day, at the noon hour, with less than one-half of the bus seats occupied, and no one standing, the broadcaster practically commanded us to "move to the rear and make room for oncoming passengers." I respectfully submit that it is not the function of the radio broadcaster to attempt such a remote control of the transit riders. We are not dumb-driven cattle; and if there is congestion on a particular conveyance the operator can request the standees to move to the rear.

In the December 2 issue of your paper Vera E. Adams gives the real reason why the public did not continue to attend the hearings after the browbeating it got the first day. As for "emotionalism," that seems to be the natural reaction of some of those in the captive audience who resent the intrusion and the coercion to listen to radio broadcasts in public transit conveyances.
W. W. COBLENTZ.

Another "Pogo" Fan Heard From
To the Editor of The Star:

I must tell you, "Pogo" is wonderful! We have not yet been able to identify the dialect, but we find ourselves greeting it with exuberant delight. "Caterpiggles," particularly, are wonderful. EVA MEYERSON.

Warns Against Thieves Stealing Pets
To the Editor of The Star:

When will the public awaken to the appalling fact that dognapers are doing a thriving business in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania and all the way to Indiana and Illinois?

Heartbroken owners advertise desperately and offer large rewards for the return of their pets and never see them again. In nearby Maryland, many a child had an unhappy Christmas because of the loss of playfellows and pals.

You may believe in vivisection; but are you willing to sacrifice your own loyal pet? Beware of ads asking for a dog: "I will give him a good home." Is a dog fence a "good home?" Is a medical laboratory with repeated painful operations the place you would choose for your devoted pal? These laboratories pay as much as $15 for a large healthy dog.

You see it pays to be a dognaper. Guard your pets! DOG LOVER.

Sees Displaced Persons Not Bound To "Involuntary Servitude"
To the Editor of The Star:

I have read your editorial of December 28 in regard to displaced persons who have migrated to the United States. You seem to be disappointed that some of these people have not remained on the farms where they were brought to work.

"Involuntary servitude" is proscribed by the Constitution of the United States. The Thirteenth Amendment makes servitude in fact involuntary, no matter under what form or name such servitude may be disguised. It renders void all statutes or contracts providing for a state of peonage.

Moreover, you can change nature, but not human nature. After dreaming all of their lives of the land of cream and honey, it is asking too much of the displaced persons to remain in the rural areas when our free enterprise system gives them the opportunity to become wealthy in the cities.
WILLIAM F. McDONNELL.

Fifty Years Ago

'Father' Eaton Dead

On Christmas Day, 1899, The Star published a long obituary article on Dorman B. Eaton, "the father of the merit system in the Government civil service in the United States," who had died in New York December 23. Born in Vermont in 1823, he had devoted his talents during most of his life to the cause of improved public administration and was the principal author of the Pendleton Act of 1883 and the first civil service commissioner under its provisions. His portrait as "the legislative architect of civil service reform" heads the gallery on the second floor of the present Civil Service Commission headquarters at Eighth and F streets N.W., and is shown to visitors inquiring for it.

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Statue for Owen

A proposal to erect a statue to Robert Dale Owen was before Congress half a century back and The Star for December 26, 1899, contained a story on the subject, explaining that the sum of $20,000 was to be asked for the effigy and that the complete monument, when ready, would be set up in the grounds of the Smithsonian Institution. This site would have been appropriate because Owen was sponsor of the bill introduced in the 29th Congress providing for the establishment of the institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." Strong opposition to the project had developed and it was only by hard work that Owen succeeded in pushing his bill through to passage. Possibly some tradition of disapproval still lingered at the Capitol 50 years ago and was responsible for the failure of the resolution for Owen's statue. In any case, the monument never was approved and Owen has no visible memorial at the Smithsonian today. He was a Scot by birth, a social reformer by vocation—altogether a remarkable personality.

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Party at St. Anthony's

On December 27, 1899, Rev. Father Eugene A. Hannan, pastor of St. Anthony's Church, Brookland, gave a party for the children of his Sunday school, and The Star for the next day reported the event and gave the names of the boys and girls who were given prizes for excellence in studies, attendance and conduct. The list included: Louis Crook, now a professor of aeronautics at Catholic University and a famous inventor; John Rodler, now an officer of the Marlow Coal Co.; his sister Agnes, now a religious teaching in Baltimore, and two other Rodler youngsters—Barbara and Katie. Also: William Lanigan, now a well-known contractor; Gertrude Hamilton, now a writer in Hollywood, and Sevier Baumer, now a resident of Cumberland.

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The Dead of the Maine

"The remains of 150 of the dead of the battleship Maine, blown up in Havana Harbor February 15, 1898, arrived at Rosslyn, Va., at 7:20 o'clock this morning from Newport News," said The Star on December 27, 1899. Arrangements had been made for the interment of the bodies at Arlington National Cemetery. Twelve men from the Texas accompanied the caskets as a guard of honor, among them being Jerry Shea, a member of the original Maine crew who narrowly had escaped death. Only 63 of the dead were identified. The total number of officers and crew lost in the explosion and by drowning was 260, those saved 94. Capt. Charles Dwight Sigsbee was in charge of the ceremony at Arlington. He had been commander of the Maine when she was destroyed. President McKinley attended the mass burial. On March 23, 1912, 65 additional bodies were buried in the same area. The Maine Memorial was dedicated February 15, 1915.

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New Year Receptions

President McKinley, The Star announced on December 30, 1899, would receive the members of his cabinet and the diplomatic corps at 11 o'clock on the morning of New Year's Day. Subsequently, he would greet the Supreme Court and other judicial officers, Senators, Representatives and Delegates in Congress, officers of the Army, the Navy and the Marine Corps, the regents and the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Civil Service Commission and other administrative agencies; veterans of several wars, members of the Oldest Inhabitants' Association of the District of Columbia and citizens independently. The Secretary of State and Mrs. Hay were to entertain the diplomatic corps at breakfast at their home, 800 Sixteenth street N.W., at noon. Mrs. Gage, wife of the Secretary of the Treasury, was to receive at 1715 Massachusetts avenue; Mrs. Root, wife of the Secretary of War, 1626 Rhode Island avenue; Mrs. Smith, wife of the Postmaster General, 1774 Masachusetts avenue; Miss Long, daughter of the Secretary of the Navy, the Portland Apartments; Mrs. Hitchcock, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, 1601 K street; Miss Wilson, daughter of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1022 Vermont avenue, and the Admiral of the Navy and Mrs. Dewey, 1705 K street. Thousands of people, it was expected, would call on these social leaders to offer their best wishes for 1900. The Star published more than four columns of New Year reception names and addresses.

Presidential Message As Interpreted in Advance

Writer Forecasts Insincere Document Intended to Hold Group Votes

By Frank R. Kent

Sometimes the ardent praise of a President's friends constitutes a more deadly indictment than any his enemies can frame. An interesting instance of this is afforded in the explanation of the "legislative strategy," fashioned by his intimate advisers, which Mr. Truman brought back with him from Key West and which is expected to become the party line in the session of Congress about to open.

According to those who reliably reflect the views of the White House "insiders," this strategy proves that, though he may not always seem so, Mr. Truman really is an extremely clever man and is just about to tie the "rigidly stupid" Republicans in a knot they will be unable to untie in time to put up even a respectable fight in 1950. In this advisory group there is considerable self-adulation and congratulation over the smartness of the presidential program. Apparently there is no appreciation that it, if it has been correctly described, makes Mr. Truman appear a hypocritical and unprincipled man who calculatingly plans a particularly low species of deception upon the American people.

Yet, that is precisely what it does and the aforesaid journalistic reflectors, though they may not themselves see it, make no effort to disguise the fact. Here is the "strategy" as they somewhat shamelessly present it: The purpose of the President at this session is to present himself as the fighting champion of the three great voting groups—organized labor, the farmers and the Negroes. At the same time, the "stupid" Republicans are to be made to seem the enemies of these groups, which then are expected to show their gratitude to the Democrats at the polls. But all this is to be accomplished without the passage of any helpful legislation whatever for these groups before the election. True, in his soon-to-be-delivered state of the Union message the President will strongly insist again upon repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, the enactment of his so-called civil rights program and the passage of the Brannan farm bill, the cost of which even its author has not been able to estimate.

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These are the three pieces of legislation which Mr. Truman will demand in his message. But, say those who framed this "strategy" and are, curiously enough, proud of it, not one of these measures will be passed. "Nothing," wrote one of the more outspoken of the Fair Deal commentators, "could more upset the White House than for the lawmakers to bow to the President's expressed will in this season." In brief, the "demand" will be wholly insincere if these commentators are correct. The presidential recommendations will be frauds. The whole idea is to beat the drums for these three pieces of legislation, to put up a grand show in thier favor but in all three cases refrain from putting enough administration weight behind any one of them to permit its passage. Success in this scheme, it is pointed out, will not only preserve all three as live issues for the 1950 campaign but will enable the Truman administration to blame failure of its phony program upon the Republicans and Dixiecrats, whom they will indict as enemies of organized labor, the farmers and the Negroes.

There are several things to be said about this "strategy." One, of course, is that, accepting the printed explanations of those who favor and framed it, it is one of the most brazen pieces of political skulduggery ever known in our politics. Another is that it is entirely typical of the political advisers by whom Mr. Truman is surrounded. Most of these are decent men in their personal lives, but in politics appear to have no sense of right or wrong and are willing to form any combination, make any alliance and practice any deceit to win an election. The thought of how their political plans will affect the country is so completely secondary as not to be considered at all. Every legislative proposal, every White House recommendation is rooted in politics. Every move is made with the view of holding organized labor, the farmers and the Negroes—the three bought groups upon whose support Mr. Roosevelt three times was elected and which the Truman effort is to see stay bought.

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His advisers are not consciously wicked. Their journalistic spokesmen ought to know better, but the White House political strategists do not. This is the way they were born, bred and trained. The question is, can they get away with it this time? The strategy, of course, is based on the belief that the great mass of the people are credulous dupes. It is an insult to the intelligence of every decent citizen and certainly ought to be resented by the three groups with which they are playing. But the Fair Deal, like the New Deal, has immensely superior propaganda agencies. It also has a tremendous bureaucratic political machine. Also it has a great deal of money. And, it is true, the split Republicans help by their stupidity. Nevertheless, it is a revolting piece of hocuspocus and not the least offensive phase of it will be the extreme smugness of its advocates and the unctuous and noble sentiments which will pour out from administration spokesmen in its favor.